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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRIDGETOWN 001133

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SUBJECT: CARIBBEAN CHUTZPAH OVER WHALING

REF: BRIDGETOWN 785

Classified By: DCM Mary Ellen T. Gilroy for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C/NOFORN) Summary: Caribbean countries displayed considerable chutzpah during the June meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in St. Kitts. Eastern Caribbean delegates to the IWC accused Western nations of practicing colonialism and racism by attempting to keep in place the international ban on whaling at the same time the Caribbeans voted in lockstep with their paymaster, Japan, to end the whaling moratorium. While Japan and its Caribbean allies were unsuccessful in overturning the ban, they were able to push through a resolution calling it unnecessary. Eastern Caribbean governments justified their position as being consistent with the sustainable use of natural resources and criticized threats by environmentalists to begin a tourism boycott of the region as "economic terrorism." The extreme defensiveness displayed by regional governments suggests that holding the annual IWC meeting in the Eastern Caribbean brought more attention to the region's controversial position on whaling than had been expected. End summary.

Caribbean Supports Japan, Criticizes West

12. (U) The six Eastern Caribbean nations (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines) attending the June 16-20 IWC meeting in St. Kitts offered unqualified support for Japan's effort to end the international ban on whaling. Japan and its allies did not overturn the ban, which requires a three-quarters vote of the IWC, but did put through a resolution requiring only a majority vote calling the 1986 whaling ban unnecessary (septel).

13. (U) Throughout the IWC meeting, Eastern Caribbean delegates and government officials strongly criticized those countries that seek to uphold the whaling moratorium. Among the harshest charges were indictments of Western nations as being colonialist and racist for attempting to force their views upon others, of seeking to prohibit whaling in order to require countries to import their beef, and of being intolerant of different cultures. The Grenada delegate went so far as to call Western nations hypocrites for tolerating "gays and lesbians" but failing to tolerate cultures that "eat whale meat."

We Are Not Bought By Japan

14. (U) Accusations that Caribbean countries had sold themselves to support Japan's quest to end the ban on whaling in return for aid (reftel) drew sharp rebukes from Eastern Caribbean delegates to the IWC, several of whom said that such disrespect toward the region amounted to racism. An editorial in the "Grenadian Voice" newspaper argued, however, that it was Japan that showed a lack of respect for the Caribbean by forcing it to support Japan's "unlawful plundering of the seas" in return for aid. St. Vincent Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves appeared to confirm this linkage when, in response to a reporter's question about why his country supports ending the whaling ban, the PM blurted out, "The Japanese want us...." Gonsalves caught himself before finishing the sentence, then offered a more nuanced answer in keeping with the Caribbean's approved talking points.

Whales Eat Fish) We Can Eat Whales

15. (U) Whales are a threat to local fishing stocks, was one claim made by the Eastern Caribbean to justify lifting the whaling moratorium. Another envisions the region taking up whaling as a means to supplement the local food supply and decrease its reliance on imports. These far-fetched assertions come not from countries that have large commercial fishing industries that could potentially expand into whaling but from islands that rely upon small, individually owned fishing boats to bring in the daily catch. Eastern Caribbean

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governments lament the minute scale of the fishing industry and routinely encourage their citizens to maximize the economic potential of the sea to no avail. In Dominica, this includes a Government effort begun in May to better utilize the often-deserted US\$15.12 million fishing complex built by Japan as part of the extensive aid given, critics believe, for supporting an end to the whaling ban (reftel).

Tourism Boycott is Economic Terrorism

16. (U) "Economic terrorism" is how Eastern Caribbean IWC delegates described the threat by environmentalists to promote a tourism boycott of nations that voted to end the whaling ban. The delegates vowed defiance of this threat, while tourism sector representatives displayed considerable unease with the impact such a boycott could have on the tourism-dependent economies of the Eastern Caribbean. The Dominica Hotel and Tourism Association called upon the Government of Dominica to send a clear message and vote to keep the whaling ban in place, otherwise this small country that has dubbed itself the "Nature Isle" and markets itself to eco-tourists could suffer economically.

Eastern Caribbean Chutzpah

17. (C/NOFORN) Comment: The rhetoric displayed by Eastern Caribbean delegates to the IWC was particularly harsh, defensive, and for those who frequently claim to take "principled stands," hypocritical. Regional officials may not have expected their support of Japan's controversial position on whaling to draw so much negative attention when they agreed to host the IWC's annual meeting. After being backed into a corner, the tart-tongued delegates and slightly more rhetorically nuanced government officials at home reverted to playing predictable colonialism, racism, and intolerance cards in an attempt to defend themselves. Observers from developed countries note that Caribbean

leaders are apt to criticize colonialism but habitually have their hand out for aid from wealthy countries. The remarkable level of hypocrisy shown by the Eastern Caribbeans at the IWC was chutzpah at its worst. End comment.

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